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A Letter on the Dispute of
Anna Breithwaite and Elias Hicks . 1824

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A
LETTER,
ON THE
DISPUTE of the **STATEMENTS**
OF
ANNA BRAITHWAITE
AND
ELIAS HICKS.

SAID TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY

ANN SHIPLEY.

REPRINTED FROM THE NEW-YORK EDITION.

—o—
WITH A
REVIEW
OF THE SAME.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED FOR THE PURCHASER
.....
1824.

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COPY
OF
ANN SHIPLEY'S LETTER
ON THE
DISPUTE OF THE STATEMENTS
OF
ANNA BRAITHWAITE, AND ELIAS HICKS.

New-York, 10 mo. 15, 1824.

DEAR FRIEND,

IT has been with feelings of extreme regret and astonishment, that I have read two pamphlets pulished in your city, entitled " Misrepresentations of A. Braithwaite, &c."

It is not my desire to discuss or widen the controversy which unhappily exists, respecting the sentiments of those, who are thus placed before the public, as the accusers of our dear friend, Anna Braithwaite. But it has become in my mind, a serious question, whether I ought to permit the character of an absent friend, whose distance from her accusers prevents her from vindicating herself against the gross aspersions so illiberally cast upon her, without endeavouring to do all in my power to-

avert the arrows of calumny and persecution with which she has been so cruelly assailed, but which, as relates to her own innocency, and a consciousness of having faithfully discharged what she believed to be her religious duty, will, I trust, fall harmlessly at her feet.

After deliberately weighing the subject, and the very unpleasant and painful considerations associated with it ; duty to my absent friend—respect to my own character, and above all—a regard for the cause of Truth, obliges me to assure thee, and all A. Braithwaite's friends, that I was present during the conversations between her and Elias Hicks ; the statement she left was correct—the subject of the forbidden fruit was mentioned, but I have not a perfect recollection of the terms made use of, and never have, at any time, given a different account respecting it, although the contrary has been reported.

I believe her visit to him was with sincere desires that she might be enabled to convince him of what she thought to be his errors, and from feelings of love and good will towards him.

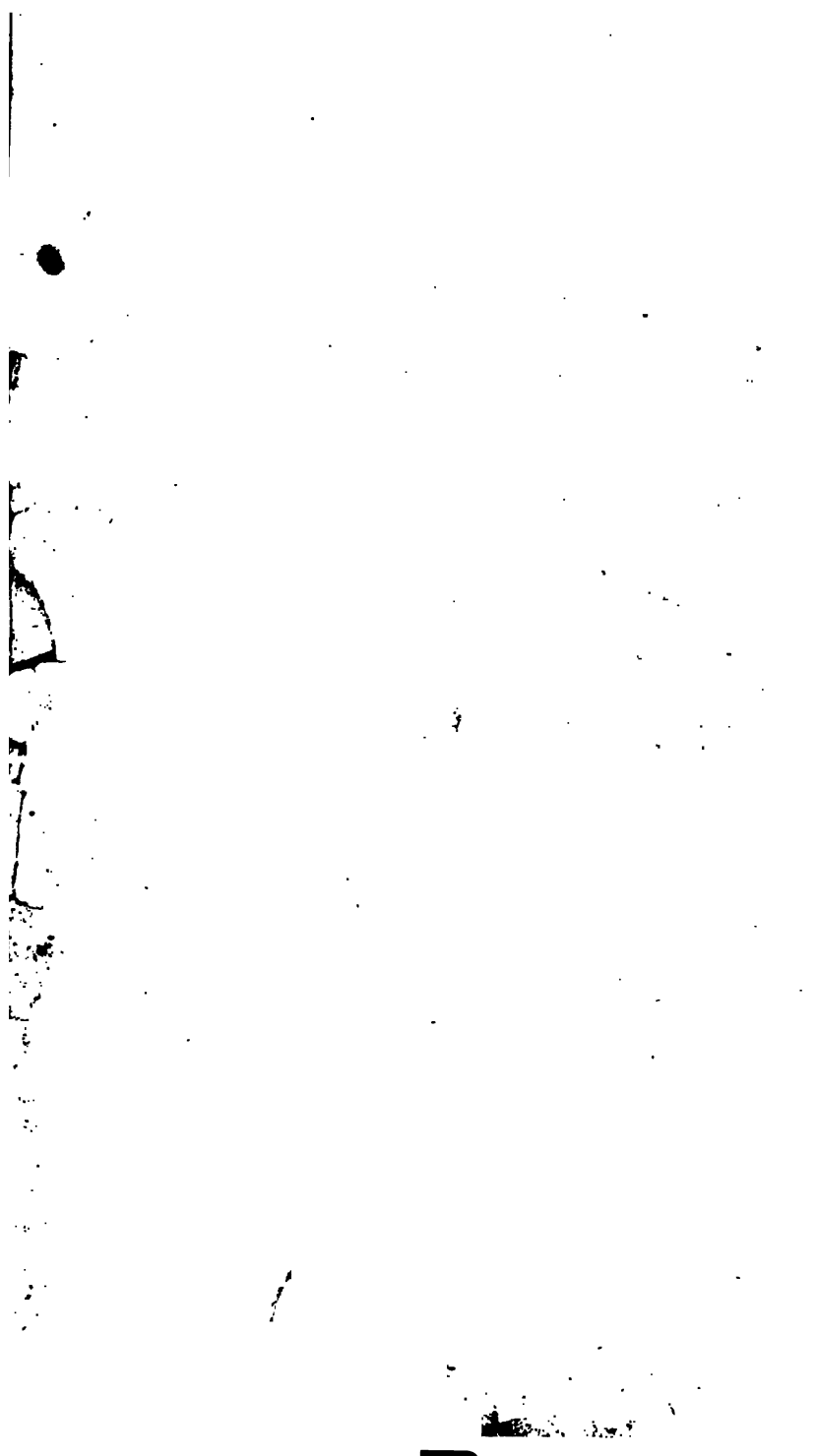
(5)

I also believe when A. Braithwaite left that statement, she had no desire to have it circulated in the manner it has been done, but with a view, that should any erroneous representations take place respecting the conversations ; that an accurate account of them might be produced to prevent trouble.

It may appear to some, very extraordinary, that I should thus express myself in direct contradiction to Elias Hicks ; and my dear friend, thou mayest be assured that nothing but a sense of duty, the peculiarities of the case, and the entire conviction of mind of the correctness of A. Braithwaite's statement would ever induce me to do so.

(Signed,)

ANN SHIPLEY.



REVIEW.

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REVIEW.

WE publish the foregoing letter, entitled a "Copy of Ann Shipley's Letter on the Dispute of the Statements of Anna Braithwaite and Elias Hicks," from the New-York edition of W. and P. C. Smith, for the purpose of defending the character of a just and upright man from the illiberal aspersions cast upon it; of exposing the unprincipled designs of his adversaries, and shielding A. Shipley from what we believe to be a gross outrage on her reputation, by its attributing to her assertions which the facts before the public sufficiently evince to be false. We must therefore state, that we think she is not the author of it; but that it is probably the *last, desperate and expiring effort* of some one or more of those individuals that are united for the infamous purpose of destroying the character and standing of that most eminent and faithful servant of the Lord, Elias Hicks, as a Gospel Minister in his Society.

The common reports in circulation, that she is one of the persons above alluded to, and that she has been particularly active against him, may be questioned, although she was, no doubt, at one time, the bosom friend and companion

of the unfortunate A. Braithwaite ; we say unfortunate, because we sincerely regret the mistakes into which she has fallen, the errors she has committed, and that the false statements of others have led her into such a delusion of mind as to think she was doing God service, in her efforts to injure the reputation and standing of one of his servants as a minister amongst us.

That this was her condition, is but too well known to require confirmation by a statement of the facts in our possession ; such a statement is indeed quite superfluous, as the notoriety of the circumstance amongst the members of the Society renders any exposure unnecessary on their account ; but as it is probable that the subject may attract the attention of others, not attached to the Society, we think it proper merely to state, that Anna Braithwaite came to this country as a Gospel minister about a year since ; and either from mistatements abroad, or those circulated in this country, tending to the injury of Elias Hicks's character as a Gospel minister, or both, was induced to associate herself with the authors of them ; after which, she made the most shameful and unprincipled attack on the above individual that has ever disgraced a person in her capacity in the Society.

She commenced in the select meeting of Ministers and Elders, where, finding her motives and intentions were viewed in their proper light, and that they were unwilling to gratify her, in

her mistaken notions of duty, she became violent, assailed the character of him, who she now considered her enemy, both in her public communications before the Society, and in her private conversations, declaring that he denied the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and that he and his followers were in the broad way to destruction. She now took the power into her own hands, endeavoured to inflame the Society, and rouse it in enmity against him ; but on discovering that she was still foiled in her attempts, she suggested the propriety of a separation ;—but not meeting with sufficient encouragement, her letter was the final result of the ebullitions of a disappointed and impassioned mind.

With regard to the letter before us, said to be from Ann Shipley, we can but sympathise with the feelings of extreme regret expressed by the author in the commencement of it ; but on this occasion we may observe, that no person of the least sensibility could fail to regret the situation, exposure and disgrace of their friend, engaged in attempts to injure the character of another by the clandestine publication of defamatory remarks. She then goes on to state that she has no desire to discuss or widen the controversy that so unhappily exists respecting the sentiments of those thus placed before the public ; but how far, let us ask, do these assertions correspond with the publication of this letter ? She continues—it has become a serious

question with her whether she ought to permit the character of her absent friend to be grossly aspersed, without her doing every thing in her power to avert the arrows of calumny and persecution with which she has been assailed. In this manner does she expect, by the cries of persecution, to divert the attention of the public from that disgraceful disclosure of the truth that has lately been made. We must say that we have read the pamphlets alluded to, and can see nothing of the gross aspersions and calumny so feelingly complained of, but a candid statement of facts: how keen are the arrows of truth! how painful that state that dreads its exposure! With regard to what Anna Braithwaite believed to be her religious duty, we must repeat what has been before stated, that we are satisfactorily convinced, together with the generality of the members of the Society, that she was labouring under that unfortunate alienation of mind which induced her to believe that she was doing her religious duty, and rendering God service in this disgraceful business. We are still further convinced, that the letter was not authentic, from the circumstance that Ann Shipley is said to assert, *after deliberately weighing the subject*, that the statement Anna Braithwaite left was correct. Who, let us ask, acquainted with the general character of the Ministers of the Gospel in the Society of

Friends, could bring himself to believe that there was any among them that would have the hardihood to come out boldly before the public, and deliberately tell a falsehood? We say a falsehood, for such it has been pronounced to be by Elias Hicks, whose character for integrity stands above suspicion; nay, the very statement itself is sufficient to carry this conviction with it to the mind of any unprejudiced person, who has been accustomed to hear the public avowal of this eminent minister of his own sentiments for upwards of forty years past on these subjects, and there are thousands that can bear evidence in this city, as well as in other parts of the United States, that her statement of his doctrines is false.

Are there any amongst these that can be brought to believe that Elias Hicks condemned the Scriptures, and strongly recommended their disuse? that he had been convinced that the account of the creation of the world was nothing but an allegory—that Adam was no worse after he had eaten the forbidden fruit than before—that if A. Braithwaite would attentively read the Scriptures, she would believe Jesus to be the son of Joseph; that Jesus Christ was not the son of the Virgin Mary—that it is also proper to reject all such Scripture truth as we do not see to be consistent with the

attributes of the Almighty? &c. &c. &c.* If such there are, we have no hesitation in saying, that their opinions are founded either on prejudice or malice, or that they are amongst those whose sole object has been that of traducing his character as a Gospel Minister. With regard to the statement of the feelings of love and good will towards E. Hicks, which A. Braithwaite is said to have had in her visit to him, the public must judge; the facts are before them: and as to her being sincere in her desires to convince him of *what she thought to be his errors*, charity will not admit of a doubt; sincerity, however, is not always an evidence of truth, nor good will of correctness of principle.

We also believe with the author of this letter, that when Anna Braithwaite left that statement, she had no desire to have it circulated *in the manner that it has been done*,—but the numerous manuscripts clandestinely circulated both in other cities as well as in this, leaves no doubt that it was intended as a powerful weapon of detraction, to be used by her friends as occasion might warrant, and which alone has been *rendered harmless by its public exposure*. We may also state, that the letter published as Anna Braithwaite's, was not the **WHOLE** of the letter

* See Anna Braithwaite's Letter.

written by her in relation to this conversation ; but was an *extract, or the substance of the same, made by herself*, it is in her own hand-writing and signature, and several copies simultaneously appeared at her departure, in the cities of New-York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

Finally, we cannot refrain from observing, that the author of this last defamatory epistle remarks, that respect due to her own character requires that she should thus come before the public in its defence. What she can refer to by such assertions, we are utterly at a loss to imagine, unless she promised her friend Anna Braithwaite, to attest the correctness of her statement, which we have her friend's assertion was the case. Hence Ann Shipley may have found herself between two fires ; she must either violate the testimony of truth in her own mind, or her promise to her friend. We doubt not, under such circumstances, that the weighty deliberation of the subject would be associated with unpleasant and painful considerations, and that a regard for truth, and a duty to her friend, would lay heavy on her mind, and of the two evils she may have chosen what *she considered the least*. From the author's remarks, whether Ann Shipley's, or another's, it is evident that she either published the letter herself, or intended it

for publication : in either case, she has involved herself in the same violation of the Gospel order and discipline of the Society, of which her friend has been guilty.

A FRIEND TO TRUTH.

NOTE.—Notwithstanding we have said we believe the foregoing letter is not a production of Ann Shipley's, though perhaps she may have inconsiderately copied, and even signed it, yet we cannot say the same of *an Old Adversary*, whose hand is apparent in it throughout. Let the reader compare the same with a letter in a pamphlet entitled "*Works of Darkness brought to light*," and he will readily see the analogy. We would caution the said individual to be careful of his movements ; let him think of the precipice on which he so lately stood, and recollect and tremble.









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